2016 QUARTERLY ISSUE #2

First record of short-finned pilot whale in Massachusetts

Pugliares et al. confirmed through genetics and morphological analysis that a stranded whale north of 41°N latitude was a short-finned pilot whale. This stranding took place outside the known distribution of short-finned pilot whales and highlights the importance of developing methods to accurately monitor and distinguish between short- and long-finned pilot whales for effective species management. Photo courtesy of Katie Pugliares

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Climate affects timing of sea turtle breeding

Sea turtles are vulnerable to the effects of climate change in both their terrestrial and oceanic habitats. Patel et al. confirmed that nesting phenology of loggerhead sea turtles in Greece is negatively impacted by increased temperatures during breeding season. The researchers then used downscaled models to project nesting dates by as much as 50 to 74 days earlier by the year 2100. Photo courtesy of Vincent Saba

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Coded wire tags identify adult salmon without impacting growth

Hatchery fish can be valuable assets of recovery programs for endangered species. However, it is important to identify returning adults to assess the contribution of each stocked life stage to overall Atlantic salmon returns. Goulette and Lipsky found that implanting coded wire tags left of dorsal or adipose fins yielded high recovery and identification rates without impeding fish growth rates. The researchers provide an alternative and effective method to mark endangered or threatened fish species. Photo courtesy of Graham Goulette

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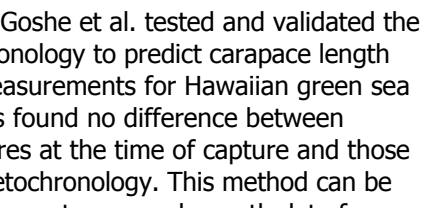
Greater confidence in technique to estimate age and growth rate in green sea turtles



Life-stage durations, age-to-maturity, and total lifespan are basic biological characteristics that are unknown for many wild sea turtle species. Knowing the growth rate can provide insight into these life history traits. Goshe et al. tested and validated the technique of skeletochronology to predict carapace length from humerus bone measurements for Hawaiian green sea turtles. The researchers found no difference between carapace length measures at the time of capture and those estimated through skeletochronology. This method can be used to rapidly obtain accurate age and growth data for green sea turtles. Photo courtesy of Stacy Hargrove

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This newsletter is intended to summarize the latest research on protected species from scientific publications that include one or more NOAA Fisheries authors. It will be distributed quarterly with alternate issues highlighting research from the East and West Coasts centers and offices.

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